

THE PROSE POEM: AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

Volume 6 | 1997

Self Portrait As My Father Kristy Nielsen

© Providence College

The author(s) permits users to copy, distribute, display, and perform this work under the following conditions: (1) the original author(s) must be given proper attribution; (2) this work may not be used for commercial purposes; (3) the users may not alter, transform, or build upon this work; (4) users must make the license terms of this work clearly known for any reuse or distribution of this work. Upon request, as holder of this work's copyright, the author(s) may waive any or all of these conditions.

The Prose Poem: An International Journal is produced by
The Berkeley Electronic Press (bepress)
for the Providence College Digital Commons.
<http://digitalcommons.providence.edu/prosepoems/>

Kristy Nielsen

SELF PORTRAIT AS MY FATHER

What does it take? I know how to wire a room, to stop an elevator in flight, to go hunting and bring home a puppy instead of a dead duck, I know when to lick the syrup off the plate and when to set down my knife and clean my teeth with a toothpick and listen

so talk already, tell me all about yourself, every little thing

I could tell you a story if you want to hear your old man ramble. Once there was a girl who couldn't cry no matter what and she grew to be a woman with buckets of tears inside, a huge woman who shook the ground when she walked and trembled the trees, a real fatty fatty two by four—can you hear me? You got potatoes in your ears? Scrub harder spud farmer

and listen up because it gets really funny. One day the woman goes walking in the woods, trips and falls across a stream bed, blocks the water, creates a dam, the water swells and pools and everything washed downstream piles up against her, trees and shoes, beer cans, shopping carts, parts of cars, waterlogged stuffed animals, amazing, all this stuff you didn't think was around anymore

all surrounding this woman who couldn't cry. She asked to be left alone so she could die, but instead the people came and took pictures.